

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NIAMEY 00134 121632Z

53

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-05 SAM-01 OMB-01 SSO-00 /083 W

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P R 121600Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2607

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NIAMEY 0134

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OAU, AO, NG

SUBJ: NIGER AND ANGOLA

REF: NIAMEY 119

1. IN ANNOUNCEMENT SEEKING CLARIFY CONFUSION OVER GON
POLICY TOWARDS ANGOLA CAUSED BY JANUARY 9 DECLARATION IN
NIAMEY THAT NIGER WAS RECOGNIZING MPLA AND JANUARY 10 PRESS
REPORTS FROM ADDIS THAT PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE IGNORANT OF THIS
STATEMENT (REFTEL) BOTH LOCAL PAPER AND RADIO MORNING
JANUARY 12 CARRIED OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE REAFFIRMING GON
RECOGNITION OF MPLA AS ONLY MOVEMENT REPRESENTING PEOPLE
OF ANGOLA.

2. GON DECISION TO RECOGNIZE MPLA AS KOUNTCHE WAS
LEAVING FOR ADDIS JANUARY 9 CAME AS COMPLETE SURPRISE TO
FOREIGN OBSERVERS AND UNDOUBTEDLY TO MOST OF
GON. AS LATE AS JANUARY 7 KOUNTCHE WAS TELLING
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PAGE 02 NIAMEY 00134 121632Z

CALLERS THAT GON WOULD NOT RPT NOT RECOGNIZE ANY

OF ANGOLAN FACTIONS BEFORE OAU MEETING. DIPLOMATS AT AIRPORT CONVOKED MORNING JANUARY 9 TO WELCOME SENGHOR AND SEE KOUNTCHE OFF ON SENGHOR'S AIRCRAFT WERE UNANIMOUS IN EXPRESSING VIEW GON WOULD JOIN MODERATE OR NEUTRAL GROUP AT ADDIS AND WOULD ADHERE TO NON-RECOGNITION POLICY BEFORE OAU MEETING. DIPLOMATS EXPRESSING THIS VIEW INCLUDED ALGERIAN AND SOVIET AMBASSADORS.

3. KOUNTCHE'S DECISION TO GO TO ADDIS AFTER RESERVATIONS HE HAD EXPRESSED TO ME ON JANUARY 5 AND TO OTHERS ALONG SAME LINES WAS ALSO LAST MINUTE SWITCH IN PLANS. AGAIN AS LATE AS JANUARY 8 GON PROTOCOL PEOPLE WERE WORKING ON MEETING KOUNTCHE WAS PLANNING THIS WEEKEND WITH KEREKOU AT BENIN-NIGER BORDER.

4. WHAT CAUSED SUDDEN SWITCH IN POLICY AND TRAVEL PLANS? AS DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN YUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL REMAINS SOMETHING OF MYSTERY AND KOUNTCHE PLAYS MORE IMPORTANT DECISIONS VERY CLOSE TO CHEST NOT ALWAYS SHARING THEM WITH HIS MINISTERS, ONE MAY NEVER HAVE FULL EXPLANATION. INSIGHT INTO DECISION WILL HAVE TO AWAIT RETURN OF KOUNTCHE AND DJERMAKOYE FROM ADDIS. HOWEVER, TWO REASONS SUGGEST THEMSELVES AT TJS STAGE. FIRST KOUNTCHE HAS BEEN UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE FROM NIGERIA AND MPLA. NIGERIAN DELEGATION LED BY MINISTER OF DEFENSE BESSALA WAS IN TOWN JAN. 5 AND 6 AND THIS GROUP WABSFOLLOWED ON JANUARY 7 BY VISIT OF LUIS ALMEIDA DESCRIBED AS SPECIAL ENVOY OF PRESIDENT NETO OF ANGOLA WHO MADE STRONG PITCH FOR SUPPORT TO KOUNTCHE AND LATER IN PRESS INTERVIEW. NIGER IS DEPENDENT ON NIGERIA IN VARIETY OF WAYS AND MUST BE SENSITIVE TO ITS DEMARCHES. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER NIGERIA USED CARROT OR STICK APPROACH, PROBABLY COMBINATION OF BOTH, BUT WHATEVER FORMULA WAS IT SEEMS TO HAVE HAD DESIRED EFFECT.

5. SECONDLY, KOUNTCHE MAY HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY DOMESTIC CRITICISM OF HIS MODERATE, MIDDLE OF ROAD STANCE ON VARIOUS FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC ISSUES AND CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 NIAMEY 00134 121632Z

MAY HAVE DECIDED IT WAS PRUDENT TOHGO ALONG WITH SO-CALLED "PROGRESSIVES."

6. AS THIS IS BEING WRITTEN LATEST PRESS REPORTS FROM ADDIS LIST NIGER AS ONE OF COUNTRIES WORKING WITH MODERATES ON RESOLUTION CALLING FOR CEASE-FIRE, GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY, ETC. IF PRESS REPORTS ARE ACCURATE THIS WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH KOUNTCHE'S

PRAGMATISM, I.E., BOWING TO POLITICAL IMPERATIVES AT
HOME AND RECOGNIZING MPLA BUT PURSUING
CONCILIATORY POLICY AT ADDIS AND WORKING WITH
MODERATES WITH WHOM HE IS MORE COMFORTABLE.HECK

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RECOGNITION, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, LIBERATION FRONTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976NIAMEY00134
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760010-0804
From: NIAMEY
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760166/aaaacgpr.tel
Line Count: 119
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 NIAMEY 119
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 APR 2004 by SmithRJ>; APPROVED <13 AUG 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NIGER AND ANGOLA
TAGS: PFOR, AO, NG, OAU, MPLA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006